

# Fire

**Mission.** The mission of the Fire Department is to minimize, through prevention, education and fire suppression activities, the loss of life and property resulting from fires, medical emergencies and other disasters.

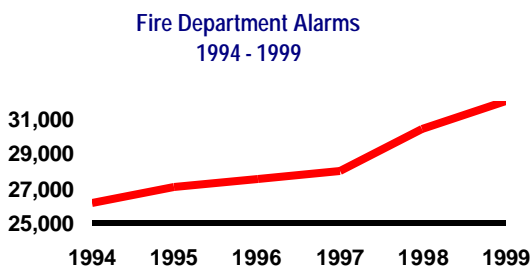
**Overview.** The Department provides fire suppression and emergency response from 18 stations strategically located throughout Wichita. The Department is organized in two Divisions: Operations and Administration/Prevention.

In addition to administrative staff officed at City Hall, the Department operates a training facility. On average, 18 recruits are trained annually, as well as continuous re-training of all fire suppression staff. Maintenance of fire apparatus is coordinated through a central maintenance facility. In a joint venture with Sedgwick County Fire District 1, two County staff work with City staff to maintain fire equipment, resulting in economies of scale and cross-utilization. The County reimburses the City for all related expenditures.

The Department maintains a four-member Arson Investigation unit, which investigates all suspicious fires. Arson investigators also assists in the inspection function, with three other inspector positions. Three positions are dedicated to public education and prevention.

**Finance and Operations.** The 2000 and 2001 budgets reflect a continuation of the current level of suppression and prevention activities. In addition, the continued investment in equipment, supplies and building maintenance for field operations is budgeted. The investment in equipment should improve suppression efforts as well as reduce future on-going operating costs.

The Fire Operations budget includes over \$20 million to fund the wages of 350 front line firefighters who provide 24 hour emergency response to City residents through the network of 18 stations. Firefighters respond to over 32,000 alarms each year, including 1,550 fires and nearly 21,000 medical alarms. In recent years, alarm volume has increased significantly, mostly in the area of medical calls.



*Fire suppression staff respond to over 1,550 fires annually, around 90% of which are confined to the room of origin.*

Performance of the fire suppression staff is measured in a variety of ways. Response time is maintained at a reasonable level through the number and location of stations, and by fully staffing fire stations. Funding for overtime and holiday pay is necessary based upon the current number of positions needed to staff 18 stations 24 hours a daily. The budget includes nearly \$1.2 million for overtime and holiday pay.

Selected Performance Measures				
	1998	1999	2000	2001
Average response time (min)	4.12	4.14	4.10	4.10
Percent of fires contained to room of origin	91%	90%	90%	90%
Average dollar loss per fire in thousands	\$7.2	\$0.6	\$3.4	\$3.4
Number of blood pressure screenings	14,830	14,947	15,000	15,000

To continue providing adequate fire protection for the entire Wichita community, it is anticipated that additional fire stations will be needed. A consultant's report has recommended a net increase of two new stations in Wichita, one in 2003 and one in 2007. Each would require 17 new positions (based on the current configuration of staff). At this time, funding for additional stations is not included in the operating budget.

The consultant also reviewed operational aspects of WFD operations, and recommended additional, dedicated staffing for aerial trucks, which would require seven additional firefighters. Enhanced heavy rescue team staffing was also recommended which would require three additional firefighters. Both of the recommendations should enhance fire suppression services. To provide the staff

included in the consultant report, 10 additional firefighters are included in the 2002 Approved budget.

The Fire Department maintains specialty rescue teams, including a hazardous materials team, a heavy rescue team and a water rescue team. In addition, as part of a neighborhood outreach effort, free blood pressure screens are provided and firefighters often participate in neighborhood events. In recent years, events such as the DeBruce Elevator explosion, the Baby Jesse well rescue, and the West Wichita floods have highlighted a need for enhanced rescue equipment. The needs have been addressed by earmarking equipment replacement funds for rescue team needs.



*Fire apparatus, including a squad truck and aerial, on the scene of a two-alarm structure fire.*

While response time is important, appropriate and well maintained equipment is also necessary to improve the percentage of fires contained to room of origin and the average dollar loss per fire. The budget continues the initiative to replace hose and nozzles on

a ten-year replacement program to ensure reliability, as well as the ladder replacement program, in which all of the Department's field ladders will be modernized. In a move which should dramatically reduce building maintenance costs, funding is included (through the Savings Incentive Program) for sensors on 50 garage doors. Additional fleet charges are included to upgrade quick response vehicles, to allow them to carry additional rescue equipment.

The revised budget includes additional data processing charges associated with the new Firehouse computer system. The project cost over \$300,000 and completely updated the Fire Department's antiquated and inefficient network. The new system will allow more effective tracking of fire alarms, maintenance activities and hydrant repairs. These additional expenditures are offset by the re-assignment of two Prevention Battalion Chief positions to field positions.

The budget includes anticipated future maintenance improvements. A fire hydrant mechanic position will be transferred to the Water Department, fire station maintenance will be consolidated within Public Works (with the transfer of a Maintenance position from Fire) and the supervisory position will be civilianized. These moves should improve maintenance performance by enhancing communication and coordination.

The revised budget continues the review of Prevention effectiveness, aimed at increasing utilization of staff. The prevention function of the department will continue to emphasize the reduction of fire related deaths primarily through public education efforts. In addition, increases in the number of inspections and other preventative activities should be possible in the future after the section is reviewed and restructured.

<b>Fire Department Budget Summary</b>					
	<b>1999 Actual</b>	<b>2000 Adopted</b>	<b>2000 Revised</b>	<b>2001 Adopted</b>	<b>2002 Approved</b>
Personal Services	20,688,571	22,023,480	21,568,420	22,144,480	23,461,010
Contractual Services	839,649	858,820	965,980	976,680	974,800
Commodities	587,297	594,410	617,300	624,430	633,930
Capital Outlay	57,326	45,100	45,720	45,720	45,720
Other	0	0	0	7,130	7,130
<b>Total Fire Department Expenditures</b>	<b>22,172,843</b>	<b>23,521,810</b>	<b>23,197,420</b>	<b>23,798,440</b>	<b>25,122,590</b>
Grant funds	14,768	0	99,990	0	0
General Fund	<u>22,172,843</u>	<u>23,521,810</u>	<u>23,197,420</u>	<u>23,798,440</u>	<u>25,122,590</u>
<b>Total Fire Department Resources</b>	<b>22,187,611</b>	<b>23,521,810</b>	<b>23,297,410</b>	<b>23,798,440</b>	<b>25,122,590</b>
<b>Position Summary</b>					
Total commissioned	375	371	371	370	380
Total civilians	13	14	14	13	13
Total FTE	388	385	385	383	393